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ABSTRACT

Language materials of the Language Improvement to Facilitate Education (LIFE) Project are described as carefully sequenced curriculum materials which use visuals to educate deaf children in the affective domain. The affective domain is defined as the area of human experiences related to interest, appreciation, attitudes, adjustments and values; and is discussed in terms of nonverbal communication, peer group influences, models, and self concept. Presented are sample frames from initial language filmstrips of Project LIFE which illustrate affective behaviors. It is explained how other units of the LIFE language materials teach cognitive labels for the affective behavior portrayed by the visuals. It is said that when teachers use the materials appropriately and enthusiastically, the Project LIFE materials can provide the visual input, the language, and the vicarious experiences necessary to enhance the child's development and to affect his human potential. (GW)

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THE CHILD IN THE PROCESS: AFFECTING HIS HUMAN POTENTIAL THROUGH LIFE*

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The Child In The Process: Affecting His Human Potential Through LIFE

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A prerequisite for any discussion of the role of media in affecting the human potential of the deaf child is an understanding of the child in the process. What are the relevant forces at work that influence the child's development? How can media be utilized to allow for optimum development?

The deaf child experiences all those emotions, feelings, and frustrations, experienced by the hearing child, plus those directly related to his deafness. The best of what is known about these processes must be assimilated and practiced by those working with the deaf child, if he is to develop his human potential, or the child will be further handicapped. This paper focuses on some basic principles of child development, applies them to the deaf child, and then considers the effect of media on them.

The Child

The development of the child has been divided into six basic interrelated

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areas; physical, social, affectional, peer group, self-development, and self-adjustive (See Fig. 1, page 3). To discuss them in isolation is theoretical. However, such divisions are necessary to facilitate the understanding of the child's experiences and their effect on his behavior. The six area framework for the study of child development was developed by Dan Prescott. It is the basic framework for the study of the child at the Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland.[1]

The child is a dynamic energy system. A basic law of physics states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be changed or released. The child needs a release for his energy. This release is exhibited in the form of behavior which is caused and meaningful. Its causes are multiple, complex, and interrelated. In part, they are defined for the child by the accumulated experiences in his interpersonal environment.

Experience has two aspects; the cognitive which gives meaning to experience and the affective which gives feeling to the experience. Bloom,[2] Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia,[3] have developed extensive taxonomies in both the cognitive and affective domain of experience. While they deal with them as separate entities, they point out that in no way are they mutually exclusive. It is safe to say that in the past the primary focus of education has been on the cognitive aspects while the affective aspects to a great extent have been ignored, if not denied. There has been little written and even less researched

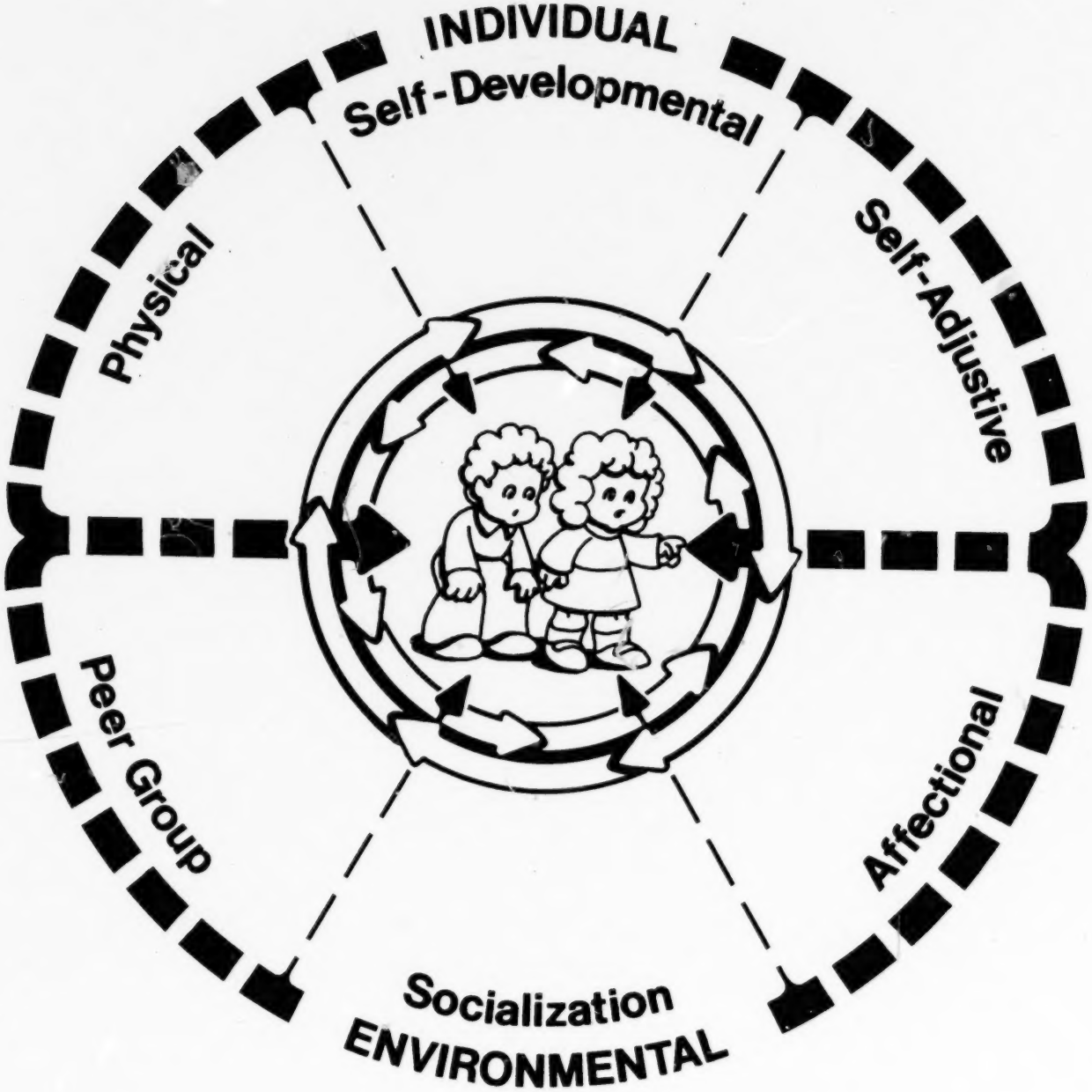

Figure 1. The six basic interrelated areas of development of the child.

on the affective aspects of education as they relate to the deaf child. Most pertinent articles did not appear in journals which were likely to be read by the classroom teacher. Obviously, if the human potential of the deaf child is to be affected, through media or otherwise, some of the attention must be directed toward the persons directly involved in providing the experiences - the parents, the teachers, and the peers.

Affective Domain

The affective domain has been defined by Krathwohl as that area of human experience related to interest, appreciations, attitudes, adjustments and values. In his taxonomy Krathwohl developed a continuum of five categories: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing by value complex. Krathwohl states:

> This ordering of the components seem to describe a process by which a given phenomenon or value passed from a level of bare awareness to a position of some power to guide or control the behavior of a person. If it passed through all the stages on which it played an increasingly important role in a person's life, it would come to dominate and control certain aspects of that life, as it was absorbed more and more into the internal controlling structure. This process or continuum seemed best described by the term... 'internalization.' This word seemed an apt description of the process by which the phenomenon or value successively and pervasively becomes a part of the individual.[4]

Figure 2 lists specific objectives under each of the five categories developed by Krathwohl, (See Fig. 2, page 5).

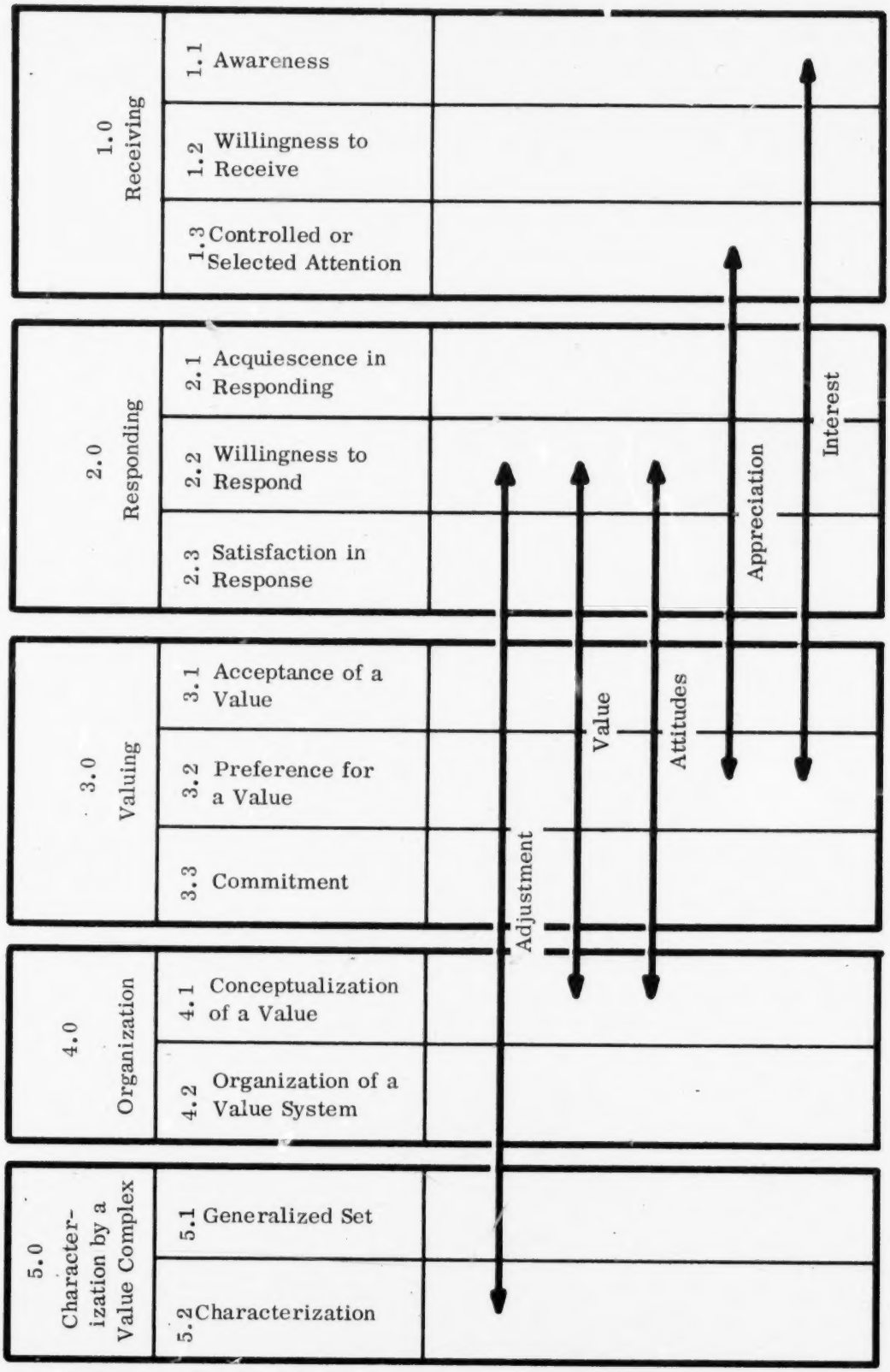

Figure 2. The range of meaning typical of commonly used affective terms measured against the Taxonomy continuum. (3, p. 37) (copied with permission from the publisher).

The experiences of the child, which define his affective domain, occur in an interpersonal environment. (These are represented in the child development framework by the affectional, socialization, and peer group processes. See Fig. 1.) It is through his interaction with others that he finds answers to such questions as: Who am I? What is expected of me? and, How well am I doing?

Non-verbal Communication

The child learns very early in life to sort out the "good me" and the "bad me," not so much by what people say to him, but by the behaviors exhibited toward him. He soon learns to generalize to "I am good" or "I am bad." This process is greatly confused and complicated for the deaf child since the verbal communication which tends to modify or temper the behavior is missing and additional non-verbal behavior is substituted. The deaf child recognizes very early that he is different, which is usually interpreted as being bad.

Non-verbal communication is powerful communication. The old adage "what you do speaks so loudly I can't hear what you say" is valid. We communicate by gestures, facial expressions, and social distance. The comment is often heard, "he just doesn't communicate" when "he doesn't speak" is what is meant. The eyes communicate punishment, approval, courage, good, or bad. The distance (position in space) maintained, communicates authority, position or rank, acceptance, or rejection.

The teacher in front of a group of children lined up in rows, or the teacher working with a small group of students at a table, sets different stages for communication and defines different roles in the process of education.

The child also uses non-verbal behavior to communicate his feelings. Those working with the deaf should be responsive to what is said through non-verbal behavior. It is important to distinguish between behavior which is a result of his deafness and behavior which is an attempt by the child to communicate non-verbally. An understanding of non-verbal communication will help the professionals sort out the differences, minimizing the effect of the child's handicap. Although the child does not learn to read or add through non-verbal behaviors, the behaviors do affect how well he learns to read or add.

Communication skills are greatly influenced by the basic belief system of the individual. If the teacher perceives the child as good and able, communication tends to be positive. If he views the child as bad, communications are more likely to be negative. Combs[5] found that one of the common characteristics of good teachers was the basic belief that the child is able. This belief system is subtlely communicated to the child. For example, "Here is a problem for you John. You can do it, it's easy, anyone can do it." If John tries and cannot solve the problem,

does that mean that John is less than anyone? Does it say to John, "You must be stupid, anyone can do that, you can't." It is much better to recognize problems for what they are, hard to solve, and then offer the child help in guiding him to solutions. It is a matter of communicating to the child that he is able. Do not equate able with easy. Educators must help the child perceive himself as being able, therefore he can deal with a problem that is hard; rather than communicate to the child that the problem is easy, and he can do it, even if he is unable. The psychologist, Prescott Lecky,[6] made the statement that it is "not what we are capable of doing, but what we believe we can do, that makes the difference." This is true for the educator, it is true for the child.

Peer Group

The child functions in a peer group which tells him how well he is doing. It is among his peers that the child learns many of the things which he cannot be taught. The vehicle for learning is often the world of play.

> It is the peer group that furnishes the best opportunity for the child to develop the requirement for living with his fellow man, not only now, but more importantly, in the future. (Without the peer group experience)... it is difficult to see where each succeeding generation would learn the skill involved in judging and being judged as a member of a democratic society.[7]

The tendency among some professionals to extend the child's academic

work period and shorten his play periods because he has so much to learn may, in fact, retard that learning by denying him peer group experiences.

Within the peer group, the child tests his strengths and weaknesses. He compares his values and attitudes with those of his friends, and ultimately structures a value system of his own. The school can, and must play a role, in providing the opportunity for this interpersonal experience. Certainly the time and opportunities for interpersonal relationship are too few in a school that rotates classes and sends its students hurrying from one room to another every fifty minutes. The child does not learn much about his fellowman from seeing only the back of his head in a formal seating arrangement.

In research by Sheridan,[8] it was observed that the things students like best about small group work was that it gave them a chance to work with their friends. For the students it was, "almost like not working." If the peer group plays an important role in the affective aspect of the hearing child's experiences, then certainly it is an even more necessary aspect of the deaf child's experiences. Schools must give more attention to this process.

Models

At the same time that the child is internalizing a value structure along lines defined by his peer group, he is also testing and evaluating

them in terms of models. Studies by Mischel and Liebert[9] pointed out that the adult model also exerts a strong influence on the child's behavior. Children are acutely aware of discrepancies in the model's behavior. When too many models exhibit inconsistent behavior "growing up" becomes difficult for the child. Bandura and Mischel[10] reported that children learn better from live models than from symbolic models. However, they found, "that almost any learning outcome that results from direct experience can also come about on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for them." Social psychologists identify the lack of consistent models as a contributing factor in the current youth disorientation.

The sixties was a period of rigidly adhered to "age - grade" stratification in all segments of our society. First graders associated with first graders, pre-adolescents with pre-adolescents, adults with adults, and so on. This generalized to the schools, the church, and unstructured social groups. Even in the family, much stratification was evident. The preschool child ate at one time, the middle school child ate at another, and the parents had a nice quiet meal while the children watched T.V. Under this arrangement, how does the child learn those simple table manners expected of him in our society? Fortunately, there is currently an attempt to break down this "age - grade" stratification. Schools are moving to ungraded, open space, or multi-level organizational patterns. The movement is

most prevalent among the young family communes. Interestingly enough, this group experienced much of the rigid stratification. In schools for the deaf there appears to be a substantial amount of multi-age grouping, thus, the older children serve as models for the younger children. Models from the community at large, however, are conspicuously missing in many of the residential schools. If more funds become available for new facilities or as older facilities are renovated, it is important that the planners and developers look at studies which describe the best in learning conditions. Model after what is best for the child. The best must include the opportunity for the child to have experiences with a wide range of models who can, through their behavior, help the child identify the kind of person he wants to become.

Self Concept

Implicit in these principles of child development is the self concept. It appears that the child goes through a process of selecting, hypothesizing, testing, and synthesizing those attitudes, interests, appreciations, and values in his experience and then organizing them into a structure called the self concept. The development of the self concept is circuitous. In Krathwohl's terminology, the "characterization by a value complex" would influence the next "awareness" at the "receiving" end of the continuum. Each category also has an influence on and is influenced by the emerging

self concept (See Fig. 3).

As the child develops he behaves in ways that are consistent with his self concept. If his experiences are consistent with his self development, the self concept is enhanced. Experiences that are not consistent with self development are perceived by the child as threats directed toward his self concept. The child must then adjust to accommodate these negative perceptions. This is an integral part of growth and development.

When the child's developmental processes are fairly consistent, that is, there is not a lot of contradiction among peers, parents, and professionals within his experience, we call him a "good" child. If his exhibited behavior suggests possible conflicts, we label him "bad" when we should investigate the causes of his behavior. Behavior is caused and meaningful. Its causes are multiple, complex, and interrelated.

Media in the Affect

The emphasis to this point has been on the direct experiences of the child in his interpersonal environment. Bandura's research supported the position that the child is also influenced by vicarious experiences through observation.[10]

Media can bring to the deaf child a world of observable experiences. The deaf child must rely on vision for most of his learning. In fact, according to Apell,[11] vision accounts for 75% to 80% of a child's learning.

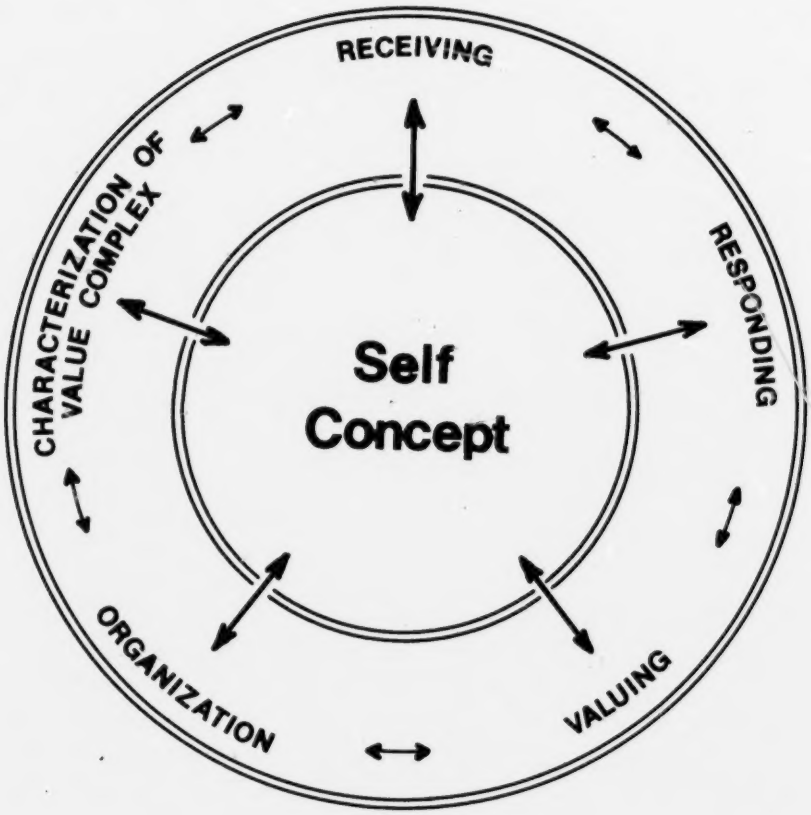

Figure 3. Interaction of the affective domain and the self concept.

Assumedly, the percentage is even greater for the deaf child.

Media provides models for the child. Children will frequently role play or daydream of their model. Take for example, the child who after watching a movie on T.V., re-enacts the role of cops and robbers, or cowboys and Indians, Big Bird, or other such models which the child establishes for himself. His own attitudes and feelings are to a great extent influenced by that person which he models.

During the time in which a child is involved in a media presentation (whether it is watching commercial television, educational television, movies, slides and other such media) he is establishing within himself certain hypotheses which will be tested and evaluated in his interpersonal environment.

Neither the exact nature nor the degree of importance which should be placed on this hypothesizing, testing and evaluating is that well known. It is known, however, that within a complex visual presentation the child frequently identifies with, and attends to, only a small portion of the complex visual. This at times can become confusing for both the teacher and child if their purposes and intentions are not congruent. An example might be the instructional film on the "Life of the Norwegian People" in which the visual portrays characters at their everyday life in Norway in a variety of geographical settings. Although the teacher's objective relates to the individuals portrayed, the child might be attending to the topography of the land or the beauty of the fiords, mountains, and green trees. In no way can anyone say

that the child was not attending. We could say, however, that it was apparent that he and the teacher were not attending to the same aspects of the presentation. At the conclusion of the visual presentation the teacher's attitude toward the student affects the child's learning processes and attitudes.

Media presents to the child the stimulus - response paradign which assists him in hypothesizing, testing, and evaluating behavior. The child attends to selective stimuli and observes the response behavior. The child judges for himself the nature and results of the responses. He may or may not attach verbal labels to the behavior. Consider the example of the bank robber in a movie. The child might follow this individual, observing his behaviors and the terminal outcome. Another example is the child who watches a movie about the concentration camps during World War II and builds up an aggressive, "hate" attitude toward the Germans. The child was not involved personally in the situation, but did become involved through the media.

Media can also present special instructions at the cognitive level of the affective continuum (See Fig. 2). At the cognitive level, language labels are attached to certain attitudes and behaviors, such as happy, sad, love, hate, and affection. These labels must not be conceptualized from an adult perspective, but rather from the child's frame of reference. An illustration of this is the teacher's labeling of a situation as "happy" when the child associates the picture with an unhappy experience. Thus, the child attaches the word happy to what is really an unhappy situation. The language labels of the affective

domain should not be taught in isolation, lest the child generalize from the affective label (adjective) to the cognitive label (noun). In the example, happy is a descriptive word and not an object identifying label.

LIFE And The Affective Domain

Project LIFE has developed and is continually developing instructional materials which affect the affective domain. The initial language filmstrips are simple in design so as to be as free as possible from visual distractors. However, the affective behaviors become quite evident in the materials at an early level. The LIFE language materials are designed to focus on the language structures to enable the child to develop linguistic rules into which a broader vocabulary might be assimilated. These structures are developed in terms of concrete concepts. The affective domain becomes quite apparent in the visuals of the first story supplement. Frame 18 of this supplement entitled, "The Bears," is one example which can be analyzed in terms of attitudes and feelings toward others (See Fig. 4). In this visual, the love and concern of parents for their children is portrayed, although the language consists of subject and verb recognition.

In Frames 23 and 24 of the same story (See Fig. 5) examples of the cause and effect are visually portrayed. In Frame 23 the boy is chasing the girl with the lobster and on Frame 24 receives the consequences of his behavior. Children who view these filmstrips identify with the affective concepts by pointing

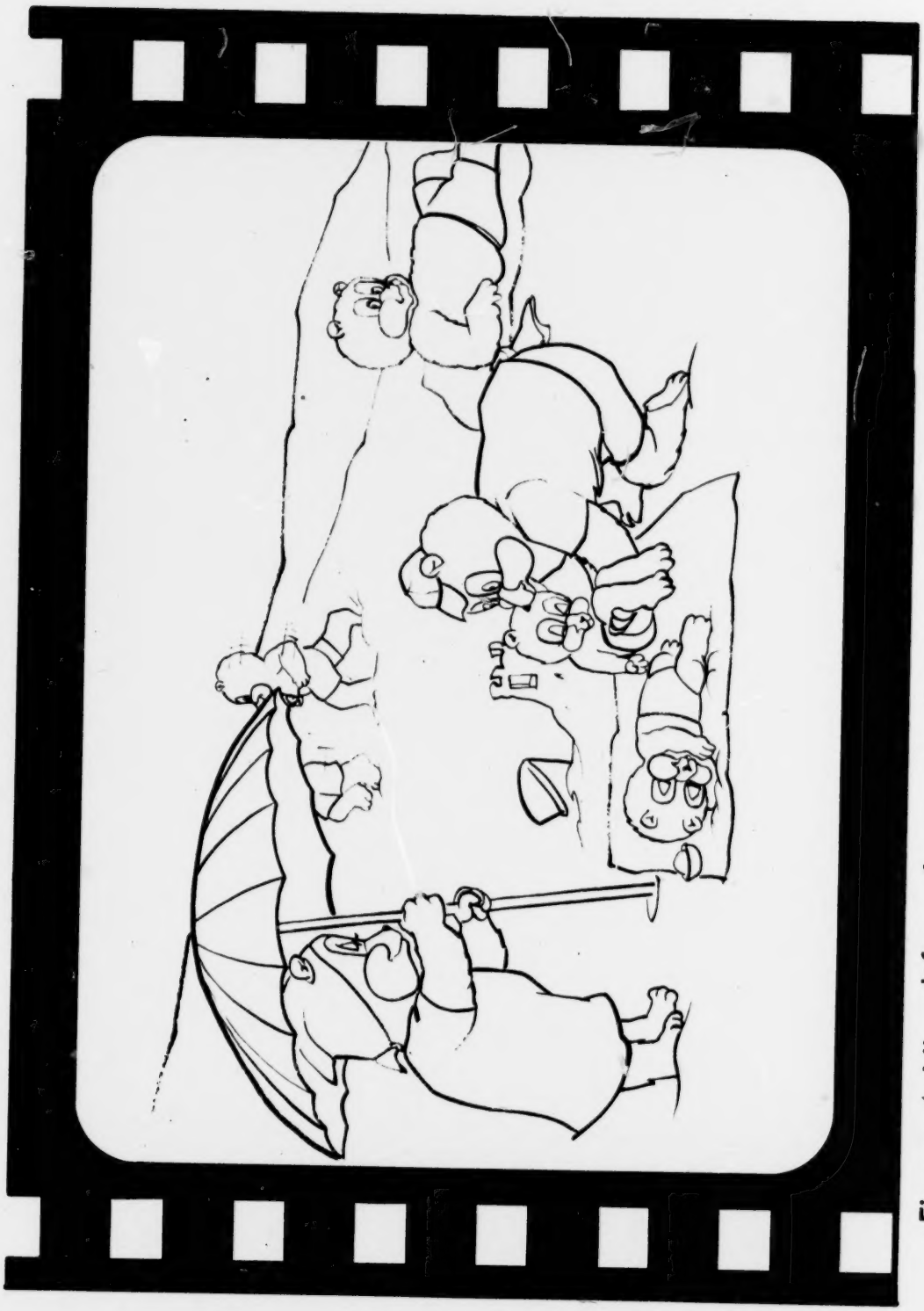

Figure 4. Visual from frame 18 of the story supplement #1, The Bears, of the Project LIFE language materials.

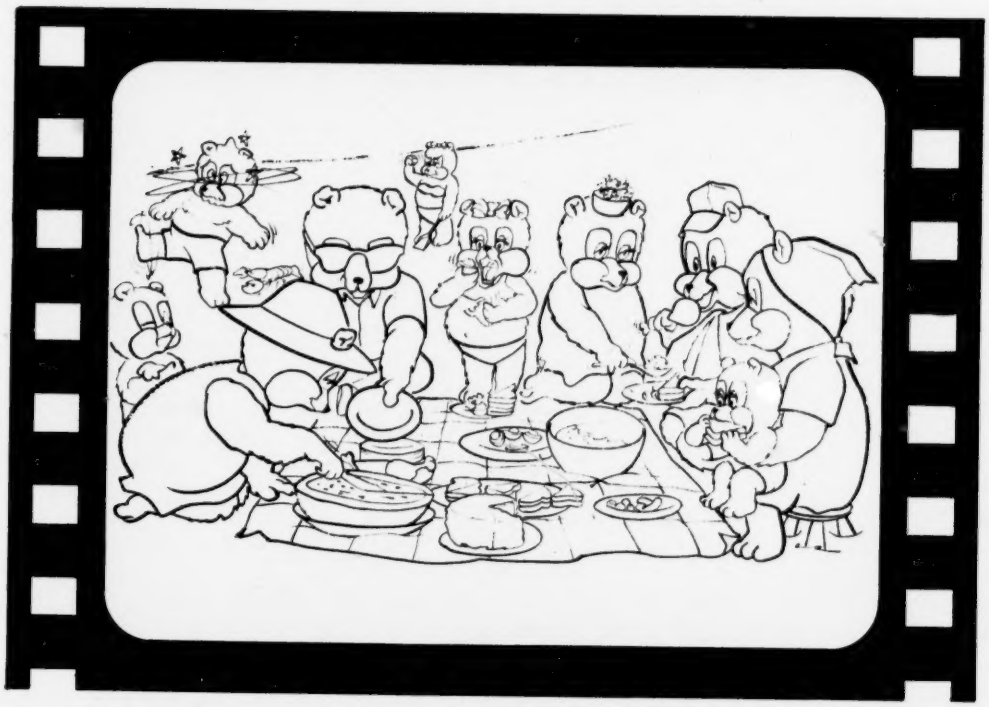

Figure 5. The visuals from frames 23 and 24 of the Project LIFE story supplement #1, The Bears.

to the picture, shaking their heads, laughing and verbalizing.

Another example of the observable affect is in Story Supplement 18. The three frames shown in Figure 6 are examples in which the student can visually identify with his interpersonal experiences. The student might identify with the dog whose picture is marked on by another dog or he might identify with the animal whose behavior is "not acceptable." The child might also view this filmstrip in terms of his self concept, his making the best of an unhappy situation, or his sensitivity to the feelings of others. These are examples of the affective domain observable in the LIFE language filmstrips.

The LIFE language materials also develop the cognitive labels of the affective domain. In Unit 10 the concepts of happy and sad are introduced in conjunction with the verbal labels for them. Many visuals are used which portray situations in which a child or an adult would feel happy or sad. This enables the child to associate the words happy and sad in context with the concept rather than in isolation.

In Unit 13 the vocabulary of thank you and please is introduced. The concepts are taught in terms of the interpersonal relationships among children and adults. It is also part of the socialization process.

Project LIFE is providing instruction in the affective domain. The visuals are "loaded" with the affect and the language associated with this

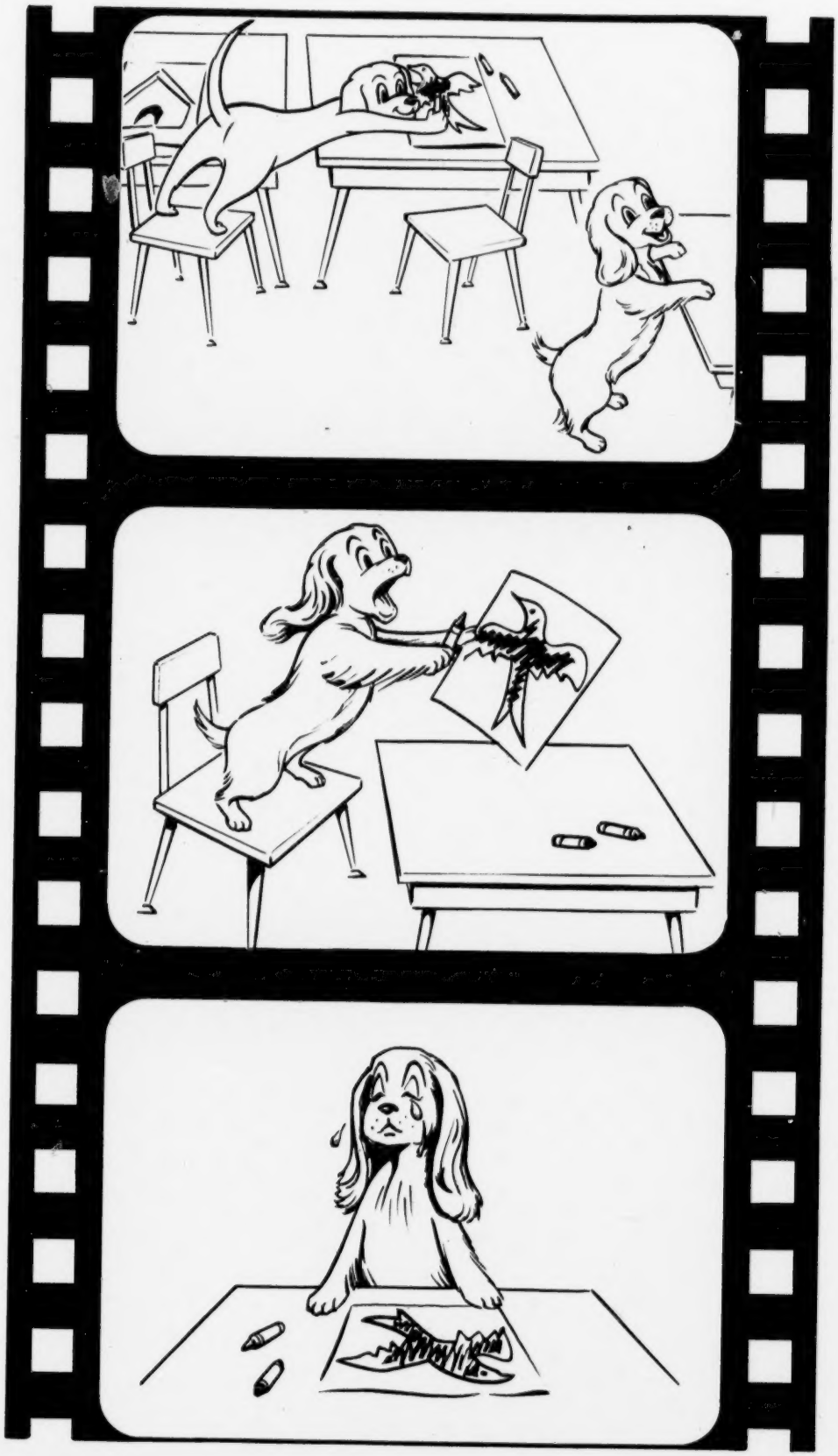

Figure 6. Three visuals from the Project LIFE supplement #18, The Art Class.

affect is included as the child develops the linguistic structures in which to understand the concepts.

Media the Process

The preceding section has focused on media the product. Media also has an influencing effect on the deaf child in terms of the process. It might be said that media is static since it is not influenced by behaviors and feelings. The teacher can influence the behavior of children by such things as how he feels, by the amount of sleep he had, or what happened on the way to school. Media is not affected this way. However, the teacher can negatively or positively affect the child's attitudes toward media through his own attitudes and behavior toward this media.

This can be expressed in terms of the teacher's attitudes and the children's attitudes toward the Project LIFE materials and equipment. The teachers, who have a very positive attitude toward the LIFE materials, and who are very enthusiastic about them, provide excellent models for their students. Their students likewise develop a positive attitude toward this learning system and they desire to be part of the program, giving of their time and requesting additional exposure to the materials. This teacher who has the positive attitude believes that his children can handle the filmstrips, put them into the projector, and set up the Program Master. Children at the ages of 5 and 6 can and do become independent learners.

Conversely, the teacher who takes a non-committal or a negative attitude toward the LIFE materials has children in his class who likewise view the materials negatively and his children, at ages 8, 9 and 10 are not able to work independently at the LIFE system.

Virginia McKinney[12] reported on deaf individuals ages 16 through 53 years who had not acquired language. They were identified as individuals with behavioral problems, short attention spans, and inabilities to acquire functional language. These students had been removed from various educational institutions because of their behaviors and inabilities to learn. Through media and a positive attitude on the part of the instructors these students developed language and a positive attitude toward education. Thus, media was able to change attitude and affect the potential of deaf learners.

Programmed instruction for the deaf, such as the Project LIFE instructional materials, provides a learning situation in which the child interacts with his environment. Through this interaction the child develops and extends his interests, appreciations, attitudes, adjustments, and values. Self-pacing, immediate confirmation of his response, and other programmed instruction aspects allow the child to work comfortably, free from pressures from the teacher and peers in the learning environment. The materials allow the child to develop the needed skills for language and understanding which can bring about more positive interpersonal relationships thus enhancing his development.

The LIFE system helps the child develop a positive attitude toward education. Project LIFE research reports from the field test centers repeatedly support this statement. This change of attitude toward the learning environment can be exemplified in the words of Virginia McKinney who stated in the summary report to Project LIFE:

> For several students, initial responses for each frame had to be reinforced by the therapist or a trained volunteer to avoid frustration. Gradually, this extrinsic reinforcement was withdrawn, and the students learned to function with only the intrinsic reinforcement supplied by the Program Master. Once a student reached this point, he resented any attempt to interfere with his independent use of the materials, and this attitude was usually generalized to his acceptance of responsibility in the learning of other materials as well.

An analysis of the LIFE language materials reveals a carefully sequenced developmental continuum and a use of visuals in the affective domain. Once a basic vocabulary sentence structure is established, many visuals in the teaching sections and story supplements portray different aspects within the affective domain. The behavioral objectives are written in the cognitive domain although the affect is present. The materials are directed toward the development of general language skills into which the vocabulary relating to the affective domain might be utilized. The affective domain is not stated in behavioral objectives, however, it is planned and visually presented in terms of the hierarchal development as portrayed in

Figure 2. That is, the awareness, willingness to receive, and/or controlled and selective attention are at the receptive level requiring neither language association nor expressive behavior. Through a constant awareness of the areas within the affective domain the child begins to respond (second level of the taxonomy continuum) in ways other than expressive language (writing, speaking, or signing).

The teacher assists the child in developing the expressive language which enables him to develop communication with his peers, parents, and others. With the language foundation the child can attach the language to behaviors in the affective domain. The child's ability to express himself with his peers in his everyday environment further affects his affective domain. These feelings, interests, and overall attitudes are observable in the way he carries out his interaction at the interpersonal level.

The Project LIFE materials can and do provide the necessary visual input, the required language, and the vicarious experiences to enhance the child's development and to affect his human potential.

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